1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

626 753 children, are not uncommon; that the penalty of sin is believed often to be delayed, and an illness may be attributed to a wrong committed many years previously; and lastly, that the victim of retribution may be one of several individuals. Parents are thought to be punished by the sickness of their children as well as in their own persons; in a case of sexual transgression it may be either partner who suffers; in the case of a neglected death ritual it may be either the heir or the widow on whose behalf it should have been performed (cf. Document, pp. 206, 236–7). When a [843] woman bears a child after her son is married to a girl who has reached puberty, it is thought that she may fall ill herself, or her husband may be cursed 'because he had agreed to his son marrying a grown girl before the son's mother had grown old'; or the son may have no children because he eloped with his wife, or has 'married a grown girl when his father had only agreed that he should be betrothed to a little girl'.

626 754 869 A lively fear of witchcraft and of the 'breath of men' is inculcated in Nyakyusa children when quite young; Mwaikambo, a Christian, explained that boys learn about witchcraft from their senior play-mates when they are out herding, and in the hut at night in the boys' village, when tales are told. 'Then one fears in one's stomach and thinks: "Father! perhaps I, also, will be eaten by witches."' Ambilikile, another Christian informant, confirmed this, saying: 'We learn about witches from comments on cases of sickness, and from tales. When someone has died people say: "He was a witch, we found a python." Or perhaps of another it is said that "the witches had eaten him". In these tales the witches are said to have eaten people, or speared them, by means of witchcraft, so that the victim dies. We are also told how the witches fight in the power of witchcraft with their fellows from other villages, and how they fly on their pythons. What we hear always makes witchcraft awe-inspiring. I feared it very much.'

We had ample evidence that for most Nyakyusa the fear of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men' continues throughout life, and that it directly affects behaviour. It is, perhaps, the main sanction for moral behaviour within the village.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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course and sharing of food and beer between fathers and sons. *Ukucangala* implies eating and drinking together frequently, and cannot be fully enjoyed by people who do not live close to one another.

The value of good fellowship with equals is constantly talked about by the Nyakyusa, and it is dinned into boys from childhood that enjoyment and morality alike consist in eating and drinking, in talking and learning, in the company of contemporaries. The solitary and aloof, those who enjoy the company of women (as opposed to direct sexual satisfaction) and those who seek intimacy with members of another generation, are derided.

Now this very emphasis on the value of good fellowship with equals is doubtless a reflection of the difficulty of achieving it. The frequent accusations of witchcraft and movement from one village to another are evidence of friction between fellow villagers. Does the friction turn on the age-village organization?

d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, witchcraft is believed to operate primarily within the village, and the typical accusation is against a neighbour.[1] But in other societies also witchcraft accusations are most commonly made against those with whom one is living, and in close daily contact: in Pondoland it is members of the same homestead or of neighbouring homesteads who suspect one another of witchcraft; among Xhosa-speaking people in towns it is fellow employees, or fellow schoolmates; among the Azande it is members of the same small neighbourhood. Therefore it is not only the Nyakyusa who accuse village neighbours of witchcraft.

Of the *frequency* of accusation in different societies we can make no comparison, for statistics on witchcraft are extremely difficult to collect. Few field-workers could be certain that they were cognizant of *every* accusation of witchcraft within a given

[1] Over a third of the accusations of witchcraft recorded were against neighbours, as distinct from spouses or co-wives or kinsmen and, if one excludes the modern type of accusation against fellow workers in the same camp, the proportion of accusations against neighbours is almost one half. The thirty-eight witchcraft accusations cannot, of course, be taken as a random sample in the technical sense; we recorded every case that came to our ears, but cannot be certain that inquiries brought to light every accusation in the villages investigated. Nevertheless the preponderance of accusations against neighbours is significant (*vide* Document, pp. 198 ff.).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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21. CHILDREN LEARNING OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

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'I learned about witchcraft from the accounts related by the elder boys in our boys' village. There we tell about witchcraft; of how the witches fight with people of another village, of their way of travelling to where they commit witchcraft (*kwa kumanga*), that is flying. We tell how they eat people and that the strength of witchcraft is in pythons. And we speak of some who are dead, who each had a python, or perhaps four, and of village headmen who have protective pythons (*isota sya buketi*). We relate cases which always appear true, and make us afraid.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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'*Tutigona* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angry. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text:

I began by learning the word or name: *unsyuka*, and to know that the shade (*unsyuka*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imisyungulu*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*nsisya*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*ubusisya*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [*sic*] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: '*Mindu*, the shades have created them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fire-bricks and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illnesses among my parents and stories of my elders.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwaihojo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipaja (21) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe